"WHAT'LL THE FOLK THINK"

BY G. G. MILLAR.
AUTHOR OF "BUSINESS SUCCESS"

"WHEN FAITHER SAYS 'TURN' WE A' TURN."
(ROTHESAY AT THE FAIR TIME.)

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"THE FOLK."

What'll the folk think?

Introduction.

A SCOTCHMAN who has travelled much may laugh at the peculiarities of his countrymen, but, if he has spent his childhood in Scotland, he can never completely disregard "what the folk 'll think," the great and outstanding fetish of Caledonia, for he cannot altogether break the magic spell which was woven round his cradle, and he still mutely keeps before him the unwritten laws of public opinion and feels that he cannot be "respectable" if he wavers in his allegiance.

The Englishman knows little of the supreme power and mastery of that indefinite, unorganised, yet all-powerful influence which up to fifty years ago ruled the Scotchman with undivided power and dominated his every action. Even now, in the twentieth century, he timidly keeps an eye in a sidelong fashion on "the folk," and in spite of himself feels uneasy if disapproval of his actions is shown by a number of his fellows, but when the voice of public opinion approves of his behaviour, he is generally satisfied that what he has done is right.

When the Scotchman's character is considered, the outstanding features which present themselves to

the observer, are repression and seriousness. One feels that he is hiding his true feelings, and even the universal desire of man to show himself at his best before woman, is firmly held in check by the typical Scot, who dreads ridicule above everything. The twentieth century Scotch temperament is the culmination of many influences ; primarily, the bleak inclement climate, the cold grey skies, the drizzling rain and the absence of continued sunny weather, which are characteristic of Scotland ; and further we must consider that for centuries, the Scotch people in the extremes of poverty were assailed from the South by a wealthy and powerful enemy with whom they were practically continually at war, and naturally in the course of time, habits and abilities developed which are amply in evidence at the present day. The Scotchman is cautious, hardy, economical, serious and secretive, and these qualities to some extent must have been generated in the conflicts among his native hills, dales and forests. There, amid reconnaissances, forced marches, and guerilla warfare, characteristics, akin to those of the average Scotchman of the present day, were developed in his ancestors, and enabled them to survive the trying conditions under which they lived.

Then again we must consider the influence of the church in the formation of Scotch character. The Scotch people suffered much from the oppressions of the English bishops, undergoing almost unheard-of privations and persecutions. They were finally delivered by the aid of their own clergymen, who

were brave and fearless and risked martyrdom in defence of their principles, but who, in turn tyrannized over their own congregations to a degree hardly paralleled in the history of the world. Through their influence and masterful oppression the Scotchman was taught to hide all softer feelings, banish all indulgences, and tenderness of any kind had to be sternly repressed so that the life led in Scotland for centuries was practically devoid of pleasure. The wife and mother carefully hid her affection for her husband and children, and was fully convinced that in so doing she was fulfilling in a meritorious manner the duties of a Christian. If she acted according to the dictates of human nature, she felt she was giving way to sinful promptings, and so nature's voice was stifled. From the same cause the commonplace language of the Scotchman was filled with phrases akin to "if we are spared," as he dare not presume to make arrangements for the future without propitiating Providence by such expressions. It was considered sinful and presumptuous to disregard the possibility of contingencies arising, which might upset mere human arrangements, however carefully made. Of course these effects could not have taken place on the Scotch character if it had not already been strongly biassed towards asceticism and the extreme in religion.

Amid the trying conditions through which the Scotch race passed, it must not be forgotten that the state, influenced by the clergy, gave the Scotchman an education, and this armed him for the

battle of life in such a way that his success is proverbial all over the world. In considering the universal influence of clerical domination it is perfectly clear that Scotchmen owe a vast debt of gratitude to their ministers for the interest they manifested in national education and the results which followed. Thus a great line of demarcation must be drawn between the Scotch Protestant clergyman and the Catholic priest. The latter put a brake on educational advance and the other gave it every assistance in his power.

The influence of the Celtic temperament can be distinctly traced in the modern Scotch character. When the Highlands of Scotland ceased to be wild and turbulent, numbers of the Highlanders migrated South, and the effect of this is considerable in the Scottish Lowlands. The Highlander born amid vast mountains, impetuous torrents, flooded lakes and all the natural phenomena of the majestic and rugged North, became superstitious, fanciful and romantic, and to some extent in the average Scotchman of the present day these qualities blend with the Saxon caution possessed by the races south of the Grampians.

Under rigid church censorship feelings engendered by the possession of poetic fancy, were carefully hidden lest the charge of being "glaiket" was made against the romantic spirit who longed to sing a song for his country. The authorship of many beautiful poems remained a mystery for years. Lady Anne Lindsay and other noted song-writers dared not avow their identity although their pro-

ductions were admired by all classes. The existence of this extraordinary state of matters may be explained when we reflect that the clergy had sternly repressed anything that savoured of frivolity; and when we remember that many of the old Scotch songs, though witty in the extreme, are quite unfit to be sung in a modern drawing-room, we can understand why the church in general discountenanced song writing. Unfortunately in repressing the objectionable, the meritorious was also condemned.

Whilst we wonder at the Scotch nation surviving the trying conditions under which it existed for centuries, namely, extreme poverty, inclement climate, oppressions of the nobles, continual spoliation by the English armies, and lastly, religious domination by the clergy, it must be admitted that if education had not been fostered, the nation could not possibly have reached its present-time condition. All these qualifying influences culminated in producing a character which is quite unique in the history of nations. It is full of contradictions and peculiarities, and invariably casts an eye towards public opinion. Doubtless this quality was acquired by the Scotchman's ancestors through continuous caution and watchfulness in contending against strong enemies, and although this parallel is hardly complete, nevertheless there is a considerable similitude between the Scotchman watching his Southron foes in the fourteenth century and his present-day descendant regarding public opinion lest some opponent discover a hole in his armour.

The general success met with by the Scotchman must to some extent be attributed to his consideration of "the folk," for he dreads in his native parlance "to gang oot to gether oo' and come hame shorn." Accordingly he makes prodigious efforts to succeed at whatever he is engaged, having as a motive power, in addition to his own healthy natural ambition, the fear of facing up his friends and acquaintances with a tale of failure or disaster.

It is proved, in a measure, that the Scotchman's character has been influenced to an enormous extent by his surroundings, when we consider that the Scot abroad almost invariably adopts the manners and customs of his neighbours. If he emigrates to America, he out-Americans the Yankees and uses their methods, while still retaining his native caution and assiduity. The successful Scotchman is met with all over the world, in every walk of life, and the seriousness of his character, and the fear of failure are his best friends in the race for success. Phrenologists tell us that in the Scotchman's brain love of approbation predominates over self-esteem, and certainly this is borne out when we consider the Scotch character, and explains, naturally, his anxious consideration for "what the folk 'll think."

The Scotchman has a strongly humorous side despite the Southron's belief to the contrary, but his wit is dry and "nippy," and in keeping with the wide eyes and close mouth, which the average Scotchman possesses. His consideration for "what the folk 'll think" creates a wealth of comical situations,

the sublety of which it is difficult for anyone, other than a Scotchman, to thoroughly appreciate. To illustrate this peculiar quality the following chapters will be devoted, and it is hoped that the sensitive and perfervid Scotchman will not take too seriously any of the humorous efforts of the writer, who, though he may crack a joke at the expense of the Scotch peculiarities, believes with Louis Stevenson, that the most desirable thing in the world is to be born a Scotchman.

FIRST.

How it Strikes a Stranger.

SO great is the tyranny of custom and association that we may live all our lives under circumstances which are quite absurd, without on a single occasion reflecting as to whether these conditions are for our general good or otherwise. Human nature is extremely conservative, and great efforts are required to break through tradition and to act according to the dictates of common sense. All nations are influenced in this manner, and the Scotch in certain directions particularly so. When a stranger visits Scotland for the first time, and considers in a reflective way the manners and the customs of the people over the Border, he is struck with astonishment, and, until he acquires a deeper knowledge of the Scotch character, is quite at a loss when he tries to frame explanations for what he sees.

A universal understanding exists in Scotland which enables the Scotch to deceive themselves as to the anomalies of society, modern ethics, and sociology, and allows them to believe that, amid many extraordinary contradictions, they are doing the right thing, in the most logical manner.

The average Scotchman, for example, is a regular church attender, but if a stranger were to ask him "why he goes to church dressed in surtout and silk hat instead of in his usual easy costume?" his answer will be, "I must be like ither folk!" or "What would the folk think?"

This to the stranger is anything but a satisfactory answer, but in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred he will get no other.

Again, the Englishman visiting Scotland finds that all popular public-houses have what is known as a back door. The purpose of the back door is a mystery to him, and he will say "that public-houses are for thirsty men, and when I am thirsty I go in for a drink; why cannot I go in by the front door?"

The Scotchman will be quite unable to enter into a satisfactory explanation, but very possibly will say, "If we gang in by the back door naebody will see us."

"Yes," says the Englishman, "but what does it matter whether we are seen or not?" and to this the Scotchman cannot give a pertinent reply, but, no doubt in his own mind he is considering "what the folk would think."

On the subject of public-houses, another humorous custom prevails in houses of a better class. Occasionally it befalls that a customer wishes to take a bottle of whisky away with him. Now if the Englishman or the Irishman bought a bottle of whisky and carried it home he would

not consider overmuch whether the passers by were aware of the fact or not, but in Scotland the parcelling up of a bottle of whisky is absolutely a fine art. It is so arranged that when the parcel is complete the most careful observer other than, of course, the person who has carried one himself would be thoroughly convinced that the owner was taking home a bar of soap to his wife; obviously his first thought being "What 'll the folk think?"

The Scotch language abounds with such phrases as "I dinna like," "Like ither folk," "Before folk," etc., and shows clearly the bent of the Scotch mind. In out of the way districts, of course these peculiarities are much more noticeable than in large towns, as naturally the inhabitants in cities have become more cosmopolitan and have succumbed to some extent to outside influences, but in small out-of-the-way places the stranger is more than amazed at what he sometimes sees.

For example, he may be seated at a small tea party, and possibly one typical Scotch dame is asked if she will have another cup of tea, thereupon she replies, "No, thank you." The stranger naturally supposes that she has had all she wants, but he is quite unaware of the ways of the country. Back again comes the hostess with her query, and again gets a negative reply. This is repeated half a dozen times, and finally the old dame accepts the second cup of tea, and possibly a third.

If the stranger, in private, were to ask the old lady why she did not accept the cup of tea at first, and she spoke out her mind, her reply would be, "I refused lest 'the folk' thocht I was ill mainnered or greedy."

Then, again, one who is a Scotchman and has lived when young in the country will remember the trial of Scotch children in general when they made an effort to be polite and to say "thank you." It was a terrible ordeal, and it was only after years of continued pressure on the part of the parents that a politeness of the most ordinary kind was observed.

It is almost impossible for an Englishman to understand this fully, and one of the most difficult things is to give an explanation of it. It is not that the children naturally wish to be impolite, but it must be remembered that Scotch children are diffident and backward naturally, dread the ridicule of their companions if they act according to the dictates of polite customs, and fear that they may be accused of being "uppish." This may seem a somewhat poor explanation, but the Scotchman who himself has experienced childhood in Scotland will understand and endorse it.

In like manner a Scotch family with a healthy ambition, necessarily bowing to the dictates of usage, must pose, if only in a mild way, to be artistic or musical. Periodically they invite a few friends to a "musical evening." Very probably none of the family or guests possess any musical ability, in

the true sense of the word, and possibly lack any appreciation of ability where serious music is considered, so that, without doubt, the whole party would be happier if they simply talked, played cards, or danced. They sit with serious faces in irksome positions doing their best to appreciate indifferent music, listening to Mary playing "Silvery Waves" or some other horror in the way of a piece, or to Mr. Smith droning out "Rocked in the cradle of the deep" with no consideration for the musical aspect of the song, and in this manner a long and tiresome evening is spent.

Now the stranger will be tempted to say, "Why do they do this, why do they not instead spend a jolly and pleasant evening?" and we come back to our old explanation, "What 'll the folk think?" That is to say, if such evenings are not indulged in "the folk" might say the MacBlanks have no interest in music, and that they are not a bit musical, smiling as this is said, in a superior way, reflecting at the same time with satisfaction on their own dreich parties.

Of course in countries outside of Scotland one will find the same lack of musical qualities, and the same parties being called together for a similar reason, but in Scotland the musical evening is more prevalent and its objects more pronounced. It is painful to see poor individuals who are not at all interested in music sitting for two or three hours in the drawing room, where they have been brought, perhaps, through a series of untoward

circumstances, longing for a smoke, a game of cards, or anything in preference to listening to music which does not rise to the level of mediocrity.

If one visits the West Coast of Scotland in July, at the "Fair time," he will find that practically two-thirds of the inhabitants of Glasgow are off on holiday, an excellent custom in itself and productive of infinite good to the population in general, but even here we find that in quite a number of cases the holiday-makers are there solely in consideration of "what the folk 'll think" if they do not go to the coast with their neighbours.

Some very funny stories illustrate this. The overcrowding which takes place in coast towns, such as Rothesay, is scarcely to be believed, and it is told that one man who met a Newcastle friend, in explaining to him that he had been to Rothesay for a holiday, added, "I didna want to gang as I couldna afford it this year, but what would the folk think if I hadna?"

He went on to say that he had only one room and one bed, in which he and his wife and five children had to sleep.

"But," said his English friend, "surely that was quite impossible."

"Oh! no," said the Glasgow man, "we jist lay spune weys, an' as ane o' the weans said tae a chum ae day, 'when faither says Turn, we a' turn.'"

Another story is told, which shows the power of public opinion in driving people to holiday-making in Scotland under the most absurd conditions.

Landladies in the West Coast of Scotland are quite accustomed to have very large families in very small houses, and one day a typical Glasgow matron appeared before a Rothesay landlady and asked if she had apartments to let, and got an answer in the affirmative.

"Then," said the Glasgow lady, "I need five beds."

"What!" said the landlady "thirty folk; you're no comin' into ma hoose."

One can understand that the poor woman must have had some terrible experiences before she came to reckon up this average.

A favourite method of holiday-making by the impecunious young man in the West of Scotland is to adjourn to some small farm in Arran where special provision is made for male holiday-makers, possibly at the charge of twenty-one shillings per week, and, as beds are erected in every corner of the farm-place, as many as thirty individuals can sometimes be accommodated.

The visitors have some very strange experiences. In one case two beds had been erected in the kitchen, and two men were allocated to each bed. When it is remembered that a roaring peat fire was kept on all day and cooking of all kinds went on, it can be conceived that the hot room of a Turkish bath would have been preferable. At four o'clock in the morning the farmer's daughters entered the kitchen, pulled close the curtains of the beds, the visitors being asleep

or pretending to be so. Scone baking now went on for an hour or two, and the heat which had moderated towards morning became extreme again, but the visitors could not escape till about eight o'clock. The farmer's daughters on some errand left the kitchen, when some adventurous spirit got out of bed, fastened the door, and all got partially dressed. They then went out to perform their ablutions which were accomplished by straddling over a tiny stream near the farm, soap in hands, after which they returned to the kitchen and, completing their toilet, sat down to an Arran breakfast.

On one occasion one of the young men did not sleep well, and when the farmer's daughters arrived in the morning to bake in the usual way, he, pretending to be in the arms of Morpheus, heard a most interesting conversation relative to himself and his companions.

"What do ye think that lad Nicol does?" said one.

"Ye mean him that's dressed up like a mountybank wi' a red jaicket?" "I dinna ken," said the other, "I think he's a bit clerk or something, wi' a pound a week if he's lucky."

"And what is the lang ane?" said the first speaker.

"I think he'll be i' the same place," said the other, "some office or ither in Edinburgh.'

"I dinna think there's much in him," continued the sister

"No," was the reply, "I think his sicht is gey bad too, an' he's awfu' gleed."

This was beyond endurance, and our long friend put his head out from behind the curtains and said—"Weel, if his sicht's bad, his hearin's no."—Tableau.

The following incident illustrates the extreme care exhibited by some Scotch business men in considering "the folk." A Glasgow merchant's buyer was called upon every Monday by a traveller. The merchant was in the habit of meeting this traveller after he had transacted his business with the buyer, and entering by the back door of a little public-house near, of indulging in a dram or two with him. But, however much he enjoyed his dram, he was in mortal terror lest his buyer found out about his surreptitious visits. He would, when the buyer and traveller were together, bid the latter goodbye, shaking hands and at same time nodding his head in the direction of the little public-house. After an interval of ten minutes, the traveller would repair to the trysting-place and discover our worthy friend seated at the table, pipe in mouth, waiting to enjoy himself, convinced that he had successfully deceived his own buyer and secured himself against all mischance in the direction of the "folk."

One can easily imagine that the Englishman, who is typically blunt, is completely nonplussed by the many character peculiarities he meets with when he journeys north of the Tweed, yet, in general, when he settles down in Scotland permanently he

falls into Scotchman's ways and very soon forgets to wonder at what, after all, are characteristics which mostly affect the individuals who possess them. And the stranger finds that if they concern him at all in any disagreeable way, they have another side, which assures him of considerate treatment and supplies him with a fund of humorous incident.

"Boys, the gless is risin'; we're gaun to hae fine weather!"

"Aye, Jamie, the gless is risin'! but it never rises abune your moo'."

(See page 30.)

SECOND.

Who are "The Folk?"

WHO are the folk that the Scotchman dreads to such an extent? The Scotch race for many centuries has been surrounded by influences which experience taught them to fear. Terrible storms sometimes devastated the country, so that the natives would naturally be continually looking for weather signs. Then they were periodically being assailed by strong armed enemies, and again here the utmost watchfulness was necessary in order that at the first indication of approaching soldiers retreat might be made to the mountain fastnesses. Still further, in the history of the country, oppression and despotism were practised by the nobles, and the utmost caution was necessary so that life might be preserved.

Church oppression next followed and possibly had a greater effect than any of those other influences in moulding Scotch character and fixing in the Scotch mind this continual consideration of public opinion, the good will, or, at least, the toleration of which became an absolute necessity if a man wished to live in comparative peace and quietness

At the present time this consideration of "what the folk 'll think" is in reality on a parallel plane

with the watching of weather signs, Southern enemies, tyrannizing nobility, and dominating clergymen. And we must admit that the continuous regard for public opinion is not without benefits to those who practise it. If a man have enemies among his neighbours, he quickly finds them out, as they are the first to shout when a weakness in his actions is discovered. At the same time, unless this quality is guided by strong common sense it may considerably handicap its possessor, as its tendency is to conserve everything and to check the advance of the individual who desires to make progress against tradition and usage.

Women in Scotland are greatly in terror of "the folk." They are invariably doubtful about anything new, not so much on behalf of their own conscience as in consideration of "the folk." Although Scotch women, like all others, have a pleasure in being well dressed, nevertheless when they appear for the first time in a new gown, they have a feeling of diffidence and fear lest their neighbours speak of them as "upsettin'," and spoil their pleasure by disparaging remarks.

When this quality is firmly restrained there is no doubt it contributes largely to success. It has the distinct advantage of preventing a man from extremes of ill conduct, and has a tendency through his whole life to keep him on the safe middle course, which, when all is reckoned with, is probably the best. It prevents to a considerable

extent intolerance and aggression, and it will be found that as compared with the Englishman and the American, the Scotchman, although perhaps holding much stronger opinions than either, is not so much inclined to brow-beat the man with whom he exchanges ideas, but prefers to "hear weel and haud fast."

As the consensus of public opinion is against what is not meritorious and praiseworthy, in the best sense, a man cannot do better, generally speaking, than abide by the tenets it proclaims, provided he allows himself free thought and does not succumb to the despotism of custom. A healthy ambition may be described as the result of considering "what the folk 'll think" in the common sense way, though when extremes are met with in this connection one is compelled to admit that the Southern way of considering the opinion of one's neighbours is preferable.

And above all we must be thankful for the abundant humour which is provided to the keen observer when he regards the variety of comical aspects and phases of life which are the results of too much consideration being given to "What the folk 'll think."

THIRD.

"The Razors are a-flyin' in the Air."

THERE is another aspect which must not be forgotten in dealing with the effects of this Scotch peculiarity. The sharpness of the Scotchman's repartee can be attributed to some extent to his considering "what the folk'll think." The acerbity of brilliant repartee is often caused by the irritation which has been provoked by the speech which called forth the incisive answer. And it must be agreed that the remark calculated to bring forth a sharp reply is felt by the Scotchman more keenly than the Englishman, as ridicule cuts him more deeply than his Southron confrere. He, no doubt, suffers because he feels that he has been made ridiculous and dreads "what the folk 'll think." His brain instinctively conjures into existence a trenchant reply, and this explains why the Scotchman's wit and repartee is terse and keen. The seriousness of his composition itself repels frivolity, and naturally he considers that the reply to a flippant remark should be cutting and impressive. It is certain that much

of the pawky, terse, and pungent wit displayed in annihilating Scotch repartee has its origin through the man who makes it, having his eye on the "folk."

In one part of Scotland such remarks have come to be known as "razors." The origin of this is rather quaint. The old negro song, "The razors are a-flyin' in the air," was popular in Scotland about twenty years ago, and an old lady on hearing one of her progeny making one of the typical sharp replies to a jocular remark said, having the popular song in her mind, "The razors are a-flyin' in the air." The remark struck everyone who heard it as being very appropriate, and from that time, when any person distinguished himself by a sally of wit, someone would ejaculate, "The razors are a-flyin' in the air." In the course of time this became shortened into "razors" and certainly it is distinctly in keeping with the Scotch character to jerk out the word "razor" after some *bon mot* of he "nippy" kind.

Many stories could be told illustrating the connection between the typical Scotch repartee and "what the folk 'll think." For example, in a company of golfers, two noted worthies encountered each other. One called Andrew Kerr had the worst of a wordy debate, the laugh being turned against him. As Andrew had very considerable regard for "what the folk 'll think" he waited his chance to regain his lost position.

His friend, who was a heavy drinker and had been imbibing greatly for a fortnight previous, was

examining the barometer and joyfully exclaimed, 'Boys, we're goin' to hae fine weather, the gless is risin'."

Our friend Andrew immediately saw his chance, his face brightened, "Ay, Jamie," said he, "the gless is risin', but it never rises abune your moo'."

On one occasion an old man was trundling a one-wheeled barrow from a small town on the East Coast to a place called Northland, about two or three miles distant, and meeting him half-way to his destination, a friend feeling rather sorry for the old man wheeling his heavy load, said—

"'Od Andra, hae ye to walk a' the road to the Northlan' wi' that barry?"

Andrew, who was very independent, felt that pity was akin to patronage, and his fear of being lowered in the eyes of the "folk" if he began to "mak puir mooths," sturdily replied, "Weel! ye wadna hae me to rin wi't, wad ye?"

During the trial in connection with the late Moat tragedy the newspapers each day had long accounts of all that was transpiring, and the subject was discussed by almost everyone. In a small company a rather weak young fellow was laying down the law in connection with the murder.

An old man who was present, and who felt that the young spark was doing more talking than he should, and possibly feeling that it was necessary to assert himself to keep the "folk's" regard, rebuked the talker gently.

The young man finished a silly dissertation in defence of the murderer, adding, "Nae maitter what *he* was, *she* was a foolish woman," and the elderly man replied—

"Ay, Sandy, but if everybody that was foolish was to be murdered a heap o's wad hae a gey puir chance."

Everyone is familiar with the trying time that railway porters have at holiday seasons, and we can sympathise with them if occasionally they give a pert answer to a polite question. The scenes at the Glasgow railway stations at the "Fair time" are scarcely equalled even in London on Bank holiday. At one of them a worried porter was wheeling a very heavily-loaded barrow and was being stopped every second or two to answer some absurd question flung at him by the excited holiday seekers. One old gentleman got him by the arm, and, pointing to a train alongside, said, "This is not the Glasgow train?" in an interrogative tone, whereupon our friend, whose patience the question had completely exhausted, replied, as he continued to wheel his barrow, "Is it no?"

An engineer, rather a heady man, worked in a Scotch engineering yard, the manager of which was more theoretical than practical, and, indeed, knew very little about his business. Our friend, who was an excellent workman, was rather irritated sometimes at the remarks made by the manager. One day he said to Andrew—

"Yes! Andrew, you're practical and I'm

theoretical, but it just comes to the same thing, you see."

"Hardly that, sir," said Andrew, "for I ken my trade, tho' I ken naethin' aboot Greek or Latin, but I'm quite aware of my ignorance. Now you, tho' you had a college eddication, are quite ignorant o' engineerin', but unfortunately ye dinna ken that."

Perhaps our friend was unconsciously plagiarising from Louis Stevenson in "Catriona."

In a hotel at one of the Scottish lakes a number of aggressive Americans were assembled in a smoking-room looking out on the water. One Scotchman, a little reticent man, was of the company. The Americans, evidently pleased at the discovery of someone to whom they could talk in a large way without having their veracity questioned, discharged their heavy artillery at our little friend who continued to "hear weel and say little."

At last one of the Yankees, boasting of his wife's wonderful cloak, said it was lined with real *vermine*, meaning *ermine*.

The little Scotchman felt that the opportunity had come, and replied, "'Deed an' I'm no' surprised at that, ye'll kindly keep yer chair awa' frae mine, freen," and suiting his words to the action, he drew his seat towards another part of the room.

Another American, who was touring in Scotland, paid a visit to a Turkish bath. This bath, though good enough in its way, was possibly not of the most up-to-date kind, and our Yankee friend, who

believed that nothing good can exist outside of America, proceeded at once to depreciate the internal arrangements of the hot rooms. Looking round with a disparaging air, he drawled out, in a nasal tone, to the bathman and one or two of the other bathers, "Whay! this is like a jail." The bathman, a typical old Scotchman, who had considerable respect for "the folk," without moving a muscle of his face replied, as he continued to arrange some sheets, "I dinna ken, Sir, I never was in a jile." The Yankee had to reflect for about a half a minute before he discovered the typical Scotch sting that was in the bathman's remark, and by the time he did find it, the old Scot had left the hot room, and he had to face cold and critical looks from his fellow bathers, which plainly proclaimed that they believed him to be an out and out gaol bird.

The Young Men's Literary Society flourishes in most Scotch towns, and in itself is a very good thing, being the training ground of many successful men. At the same time, as one can easily imagine, it sometimes happens that the standard of literary merit is not of a very high order. In connection with one society which did not have many brilliant men amongst its members the following story is told. Andrew Robb, a very intelligent Scotchman, had a seat in the church to which this society was attached, though he did not very often go to religious service, complaining that he was rather deaf. His wife used to say that it was "gey funny he could

hear weel eneuch when it was the theatre he gaed to."

On a particular Sunday evening his wife went to the church alone, and Andrew was left reading at the fireside.

On her return she was all in a glow and burst out with "There's gaun to be a grand performance i' the toon hall by the Young Men's Literary Society, in connection wi' some cherity or ither, and I promised Lucky Webster, whose son is the secretary, that you wad gang, You'll hae to gang, ye ken, Andra, or 'what 'll the folk think?'"

"O, ay," said Andrew, "I'll gang."

"I thocht ye would gang," said she, "because ye mind ye were at ane o' the performances last year and enjoyed it awfu' much."

"O, ay," returned Andrew, "I never got sic a trate i' my life; I'll be there; but," he added, "my reason for gaun is very different frae yours."

"Hoo that, Andra?" said his better half.

"Weel," said he, "when a' thing o' that kind is guid, it's worth seein', when it's bad it's no worth seein', and when it's very bad, it's weel worth seein', and that's the reason I'm gaun."

Several farmers had met in the West country of Scotland and, naturally, their talk turned on cattle. In the course of conversation one man extolled the ability of a neighbour to an extraordinary degree. He claimed that he had never met a man more skilful in dealing with sick cattle in the whole

course of his life. A farmer present, who was something of an authority on veterinary treatment, felt that he was being lowered in the opinion of "the folk," and prepared to rehabilitate himself and regain his prestige. The man who had been extolled as a cattle expert indulged in bouts of drinking occasionally, and being a coarse man naturally, was, when in his cups, almost unendurable. Our friend, after a little consideration when the laudatory remarks had been finished, answered, "Ay, Jimmie, he's a great man amon' beasts an' a great beast amon' men."

An old Scotchman, who in his younger days was a keen volunteer, at a ball given in connection with his regiment, was superintending the catering department. The room in which our valiant defenders sat down to supper with their lady friends was rather small, and some trouble ensued before all got accommodation. A local lawyer made himself conspicuously disagreeable by demanding, in peremptory tones, room for himself and two lady friends. This man was the son of a fisherman who had belonged to a neighbouring village called Dykehaven. The old sergeant-major became very irritated at the legal man's lack of politeness, and feeling that he, as superintendent of the arrangements, was possibly looked to by the company generally to administer a rebuke to the inconsiderate lawyer, turned to him and in a loud voice which attracted the attention of all present, said—

"'Od Flucker, it's easy seen you're no faur removed frae a Dykehaven fishwife yet."

The lawyer never forgave our worthy friend, though they lived in the same village for many years, and it is not hard to understand this, as the castigation was administered before a great many mutual friends, and was so severe that even a lawyer could find no words to frame a suitable reply.

At a Scotch hydropathic a few men were gathered round the fire of a smoking room a few minutes before the dinner hour. One typical Scotch gentleman in a jacket suit sat quietly reading his paper. In front of him with his back to the fire and his legs apart stood a youth of twenty displaying his new evening dress suit with white vest to boot. The man who sat reading knew the lad as being a clerk in the office of a friend of his own, but unfortunately for himself the youth did not know the other. With a swaggering and superior air the young fellow turned to the quiet man, and remarked loudly,

"You don't dress for dinner?"

Our peaceable friend looked up from his paper and replied with dangerous calm—

"No, I dress to please mysel'; I'm sorry if my tweed suit offends you or ony o' the ither gentlemen present, and tho' I gie a fair amount o' consideration to the human race generally, it doesna go as far as to mak' me dress to please ither folk."

Then after a brief and impressive silence he

added, " No, I leave dressin' for dinner to clerks and such like, as you are."

One cannot help being sorry for the youth, though he richly deserved his punishment. No doubt he would be more careful again before tackling an unknown quantity.

At a golf match on the East Coast of Scotland a worthy old golfer followed behind the competitors. One was a professional and the other an amateur. After a hard tussle the professional won by one hole up. Our old friend naturally backed the amateur, who, being a gay young spark, was dressed in new golfing apparel consisting of a red jacket and white trousers. When the match was finished the old Scotchman remarked to the young competitor, "Ay, if ye'd haen a bit pair o' black breeks on, man, Jamie, ye micht hae won," thus expressing his admiration of the golfer's play, and at the same time reproving his dandyism.

At a golf club supper, held at the time of the Jameson Raid, the health of the army was proposed by a local medical man. Incidentally he touched upon the raiders, and extolled Jameson's act as one typically British and highly meritorious. The man who replied to the toast, an old volunteer, who took a much more common-sense view of the matter, felt impelled to deliver himself of a " razor " which he did in the following manner. At the close of a few well-chosen remarks, in reply he said,

" Well, gentlemen, my opinion is, in connection with the Jameson trouble, that it would hae been

far better for himsel' and everybody concerned if, instead of raidin' the Transvaal, Dr. Jameson had stuck to sellin' 'Gregory's mixture.' "

The medical man fortunately had a keen sense of humour which somewhat mitigated his indignation.

Two old Scotchmen forgathered one Sunday on the outskirts of their native village, and, after discussing various topics, one of them who favoured co-operation, said to his friend who was distinctly against the movement—

"Man, Aleck, we hae some grand men on oor committee. Do ye ken this? Oor secretary has a classical eddication."

His friend, who felt that this remark was intended to reprove his own anti-co-operative beliefs, replied—

"Weel, Geordie, mebbie he has a classical eddication, and mebbie he hasna, I dinna ken, but there's a'e thing I'm aware o', an' it's this, you dinna ken what a classical eddication is."

One of the revival waves which passed over the country thirty years ago struck a small town on the East Coast of Scotland. One old man became very much affected and worried all his friends to come to the meetings. A particular chum of his, with a very sharp tongue, had been tried beyond endurance and determined to end the matter, so, after the usual invitation and glowing reports about the happiness which existed amongst the members, etc., etc., he replied as follows:—

"Peter, you think it wad dae me a heap o' *guid*

if I cam' doon to your meetin', but, man it would dae me a heap o' *ill.*"

As the speaker was a highly intelligent man with a well-balanced philosophic mind, one can easily understand his irritation and its consequence.

A crowd of workmen during the meal-hour were standing at the gate discussing various topics, and finally all were listening to the orations of one of the crowd who, a year before, had been on a sea voyage which lasted about three months. This man since his return from his nautical experience was never tired of dwelling on the wonders of the deep, and in particular his own extraordinary experiences at sea. On this particular occasion he was describing a voyage he had in the Mediterranean, during which evidences of a shipwreck were encountered. The ship had evidently been laden with fruit, as, according to the narrator, for miles round the sea was strewn with apples. An old man, whose disparaging remarks was the *bête noir* of the narrator, was listening outside the crowd and feeling that the young cockerel had better have his wings clipped for his own sake and for everybody else's, raised his head and jerked out the following :—

"Jockie! were ye oot o' sicht o' land when that happened?"

A rather irascible old Scotchman had a wife who, poor body, did not sleep very well o' nights. John, douce man, if quietness prevailed, fell asleep at once when he went to bed, and slept tranquilly

"Hae ye to walk a' the road to the Northlan' wi' that barry?"

"Weel, ye wadna hae me to rin wi't, wad ye?"

(See page 31.)

till morning, but if disturbed during the night he woke up and found it very hard to fall over again. On this particular occasion the night was swelteringly hot, and after the worthy couple had retired, Leebie, vainly endeavouring to fall asleep shifted her position to try if that would help matters. This woke up John, who, in a tone of exasperation said, "Lie still." Silence followed.

After another half hour or so Leebie found it absolutely necessary to try the other side again, and said apologetically, "John, I'll hae to turn roun' again," and John, irritated beyond endurance at being again disturbed, replied in a tone of the utmost acerbity, "'Od 'ooman, can ye no lie still?"

Another interval of silence followed. The heat of the night increased, and poor Leebie after suffering incredibly had at last to murmur that she would have to make another change. This time John had just got into a comfortable slumber, and on being wakened he positively bellowed like one beside himself, "*Confoond ye, woman, lie still!!*"

Leebie, thinking that John's voice might be heard outside, and fearing "what the folk would think," went to another bed where she could turn to her heart's content without rousing the slumbering lion.

The typical old Scotch "grannie" had a very sharp tongue indeed, as many of us will possibly remember to our cost. The following incident illustrates this. A small boy was being trained

up by his grannie to habits of economy, and at the age of seven he was the possessor of 30s. Boasting about this to one of his small-boy friends, he was considerably upset when his chum refused to believe it. Accordingly he referred the matter to his grannie, who was standing at the door.

"Grannie, haven't I got 30s. i' the bank? This laddie says it's no true."

Whereupon she, indignant at any reflection being cast on her grandson, and possibly with an eye to "the folk," replied—

"Ay, ye young scoondrel, he has 30s. i' the bank, an' it's mair than ye'll ever hae a' your life."

It's a true saying: "You maunna tramp on the thistle."

A worthy Scotch couple who lived in a country town managed to jog along the path of life very harmoniously, although in one respect they were extremely different. The goodman was a bit of a book-worm, and he was familiar with the best English literature, while his good wife contented herself with the *Family Herald* and other light periodicals. On one occasion as he came home at dinner time, he saw a magazine lying on the table. Everyone knows the horror a picture sometimes appears when printed in a newspaper, and in this instance the portrait of a lady author appeared on the first page. She is far from beautiful to begin with, but by the time the printer had finished, her likeness resembled that of a monkey. Our friend as

he came in took up the paper, looked at the portrait, heaved a sigh, laid it down again, then remarked, "Ay, I suppose that ane'll write aboot love, too."

Two Scotch friends were discussing the relative health of the town and country. One, whose son lived in Glasgow, contended that when he visited that city and remained for a week or two, he returned very much better in health. The other who was something of a philosopher, intuitively understood that the benefit to his friend's health was simply the result of seeing his son and playing with his grandchildren. At the same time growing tired of the absurd contention that a large manufacturing town was healthier than the country, and, metaphorically stropping his razor, he replied, "Weel, James, I never heard afore that Glasgow was a health resort."

An old country body returning to her fireside after a visit to a friend, remarked to her goodman who was sitting at the "ingle neuk:"—

"Fancy that upsetting body, Ann Kinnaird, she's turned awfu' releegious noo. When I lookit in to see Johnnie Robb, wha's in his bed wi' rheumatism, puir body, wha was there but Ann? She was at the fireside prayin' for 'im."

And on went the good woman, tirading against her over-religious friend. Her husband at length got a bit tired, and when she finished up by saying—

"If I had been him, I wad hae telt her I could pray for mysel'," he replied with cutting sarcasm—

"Wad ye? Weel, ye wad hae telt a big lee."

A Scotch ploughman was taking his porridge one morning, and he was swallowing the spoonfuls lazily making a semblance of masticating them, whereupon the old farmer who possibly thought he was taking up too much time over the meal, said, "Dae ye chew yer porridge, Patie?"

And Patie replied, "Ye dinna think I've teeth in my guts, dae ye?"

The old spirit of Little Jock Elliot is still alive yet: "Wha daur meddle wi' me?"

Two cronies were sitting at the seashore discussing the political outlook and other questions. One of them, who had a son in Manchester, was never tired of extolling his merits, and almost invariably whatever subject was under discussion ended by mentioning his name or quoting his opinion. His friend knew exactly the mental calibre of the son, and, as one could imagine, grew very tired of the continuous reiteration. After suffering for a considerable time without giving any sign of the irritation felt, on this particular morning the last straw had been put on the camel's back, and he decided to administer castigation to his friend, so after a wonderful description of the place of business in which his son was employed and the wonders which he was working in this place, he said—

"Weel, Wullie, I'm gled to hear yer son's gettin' on sae weel, for between oorsels, when he was here he was a gey single-breisted chiel."

The meaning here given to the word "single-breisted" is exquisite, and it is almost impossible that anyone not being Scotch can appreciate it at its full value.

The habit of making tart remarks displayed by old typical Scotchmen sometimes extends even to their death bed. On one occasion a man over eighty, who, during his long lifetime, had acquired a reputation of having a very sharp tongue indeed, lay dying. A young lady was nursing him during the night, and towards morning the old man was semi-delirious and life only flickered within him. As none of his relations were at hand, she, with a full sense of the responsibility upon her, began to read a hymn to him, whereupon he roused himself a little and she just managed to hear him articulating in a low voice—

"Haud yer tongue, ye blethering bitch."

Such dourness and steadfastness are distinctly typical of the older generations of the Scotch.

Hundreds of stories illustrate the acerbity of Scotch repartee, much of this being due to the use of Scotch dialect, which lends itself to pungent retort much more effectually than English does. The Scot suffers long before he rebels, but when he does so he hits very hard indeed. Many a time the typically smart Englishman taking the Scotchman off finds that he has awakened the wrong "nigger." The Scot as a rule goes slow and says nothing till he feels that "the folk" have their eyes on him, then, metaphorically he draws his

claymore and lays about him; so from another point of view it can be claimed that regard for "what the folk 'll think" is beneficial to the Scotch race, as often it is the motive power propelling a line of conduct which commands respect from defeated assailants.

FOURTH.

The Fe-Fo-Fum of Whisky Drinking in Scotland.

The regard for "what the folk 'll think" in Scotland has led to a very elaborate system of forms being connected with the drinking of a glass of whisky. An Englishman or Irishman would simply say "Good health" or use an equivalent phrase, and drink his beverage, but in Scotland the taking of a dram is a very solemn action indeed, involving a series of observances which must not be forgotten under any condition. Scotchmen who have spent their childhood in Scotland can all remember the solemnity of the occasion when a few friends were assembled in the house, and the goodwife brought out her "Caraffe." Faces at once became serious, and conversation moderated, while if any children were about they were reduced to complete silence.

As the whisky was being slowly poured out, each man, when his glass had been filled about a third said, "Stop! stop!! stop!!!" The hostess in a pleasant but emphatic way insisted on filling the glasses to the brim amid continued protestation from her guests. Perhaps one guest more cunning than the others, when his glass is being filled, carries

on a conversation with his neighbour, thus turning his face away from the operation, although he sees it perfectly well with a sidelong glance. The conversation finished he turns round horrified to discover that his glass has been filled to the top. He vainly protests, and, of course, is answered as the others have been. The host or hostess then invites their guests to drink. The glasses are raised, each looks at his neighbours, nods to them individually, and murmurs inarticulately, "My respecks," till he goes all round, then he simply tastes the whisky and puts it down.

An unwritten law insists that the drinker must make an extremely wry face after tasting the liquor, as if he held it in complete detestation. If he did not do this "the folk" might think he was fond of drinking. Now it may chance that this is the case; nevertheless, in deference to public opinion he screws up his face as if the whisky were poison. The rest of the guests do the same thing, and the dram glasses are placed on the table practically untouched. The host and hostess now assume a manner of great pressure and hospitality, whereupon with shakings of the head and murmurings of "I'm no a guid whusky drinker," and kindred expressions, which are replied to by the host with, "Tak' it up, it's guid whusky, it'll dae ye nae harm." The glasses are again raised, and as usages now decree that no more hesitation need be practised, they are instantly turned bottom up and the whisky is over the throats of the men.

The solemnity is not so depressing now and faces relax a little, although at this juncture any attempt at levity would not be appreciated. Perhaps the oldest of the guests may say, "That's very guid whusky. I can tell you hoo to ken guid whusky; ye never feel it in yer mooth, but when it's doon there's a grand heat a' o'er yer inside."

This performance, though perhaps happening many times during the year, is specially conspicuous at the New Year time, when the whisky is supplemented by currant loaf or shortbread, and the usual customs are adhered to with even more traditional exactitude, as the occasion is a special one. Nowadays, especially in large cities, to a great extent these traditions have disappeared, still their influence is discernible in nearly all Scotch families, while in the smaller villages far removed from busy cosmopolitan centres they flourish in almost pristine vigour.

A universal conspiracy seems to exist in Scotland in connection with drinking. Most Scotchmen are moderate drinkers, but at the same time they seem anxious to make you believe they are extremely temperate if not completely abstinent, and a most elaborate social organisation of pretence exists to enable them to carry out this course of action. Public-houses mostly have back doors, entering from an adjoining lane. Anyone passing through this lane, which generally is a thoroughfare *may* be proceeding on business of some kind. In any case it is a hundred chances to one that nobody sees him popping in by the little back door. Now he

can do this, get his dram, and return by the same way and no one be any the wiser, though if you ask him why he takes all this trouble, it is not in the least likely he will be able to give a satisfactory answer. The real explanation is simply that "the folk" are members of this organisation of pretence, and as they decree that a respectable man should not be seen going into a public-house, the back door must be resorted to by him who has any regard for "what the folk'll think."

Another popular method in Scotland of indulging in a dram, and still retaining the good opinion of the public, is to patronize certain houses which exist in most large towns, and in Scotland are known as licensed restaurants. As these houses provide lunch, a man may be entering any time between twelve and three say, with the intention of meeting some friends and having a dram with them, though to the outsider the fact of his entering such a house indicates simply that he is going there for lunch, and nothing more. Now although those who observe him going in may know perfectly well what his object is, possibly from their own experience, nevertheless as this is according to the code insisted on by "the folk," they are perfectly satisfied as to his respectability.

Another amusing aspect of Scotch drinking is that the bold Scot who enters by the front door of the public-house cannot pass the precincts of the doorway without furtively glancing up and down the street on entering. Doubtless this is a matter of heredity,

and was a custom absolutely necessary in olden time when a breach of the "folk-law" was a much more serious matter than it is now. An honest Scotchman, no matter how broad his views, will tell you that he feels himself impelled to do this, whatever house he may be going into, if the ultimate object is a dram. It may be a small public-house in some obscure country town, or the most fashionable restaurant in London, but the same feeling comes over him, at least to some extent.

This leads to many humorous situations—for example: A commercial traveller representing an important firm, himself a man of considerable substance, called on some business friends from whom he got large orders, at the beginning of every January. The head of this firm asked him into his private room, and to mark the time of the year invited him to take a taste. Accordingly two glasses were filled, and each drank the health of the other. At this moment a knock was heard, and simultaneously the door was opened by someone with a message. Our commercial friend in whom heredity evidently had a strong hold immediately seized his glass and slipped it under the table, and his face assumed a serious business air. As the occasion did not in the slightest degree call for the action, he was rather ashamed of himself immediately afterwards, but he had simply followed the instinct which in Scotland prompts every man to lead his neighbours to believe he drinks very much less than he really does.

A worthy bailie who shed lustre on the municipality of a large town on the North East of Scotland encountered an Englishman at a London hotel, and over a friendly glass became very confidential. He admitted that he liked a little whisky, but added that his sons, though married and having families of their own, had never seen their father drinking. He glowed with virtue while telling this, and seemed to believe that it shed unextinguishable lustre on his character. The Englishman certainly gave his companion credit for self-denial, and was therefore more than surprised when the worthy Scot concluded, "Ay, in ma hoose, sir, my sons never, never saw their father tak' a gless o' whusky. I consider it ma duty to gie them a guid example, but in the bedroom press my wife keeps a bit 'cutter,' and we have aye a taste before we gang to bed."

All-powerful "folk;" worthy man! in complete unconsciousness that he was simply acting according to the dictates of his "neebors," and forgetting that very likely his sons knew all about the dodge, and were possibly putting it into practice for their own children's benefit.

Sometimes in Scotland women buy whisky at the grocer's and get this marked in his day-book as tea. Doubtless to some extent this is done in order to deceive their husbands, but at the same time it must be admitted that the practice is partly the outcome of overconsideration for "what the folk 'll think." It is quite in keeping with the drinking traditions in Scotland, for if the whisky

is brought into the house under these conditions, no evidence is thereby left to prove that certain families were in the habit of getting whisky sent along with their groceries.

A funny story is told of a certain Scotch lady who had been invited to a wealthy relation's dinner party where champagne *ad lib.* had been provided. This good woman though familiar with whisky had never drunk champagne before, but as "ither folk" were drinking it she followed suit, and as the man behind the chair continually refilled her glass as she emptied it, it soon began to have an effect on her. This was not very apparent so long as she was sitting, but when dinner was over and the guests rose to go to the drawing-room, our friend discovered that she could not rise. Her legs refused to support her body. To the worthy hostess who immediately came to her rescue she said that she could not understand what was wrong, as she had taken no whisky or wine at all. The hostess, who was suspicious, pointed to her glass in which a little champagne still remained and asked if that was what she had been drinking.

Thereupon the good woman replied, "Yes, I jist drank twa or three glesses o' that."

"But," said the astonished lady, "do you not know that is champagne?"

"Oh, my!" exclaimed our worthy friend. "Champagne, did ye say, I thocht it was some new kin' o' ginger beer."

Although in Scotland more strong drink is taken

than should be, it must be admitted that climatic conditions influence the effects of alcohol on the body, and further that bleak and gloomy weather such as prevails in the North, induces more drinking than pleasant climatic conditions do. In warm, sunny countries wines are invariably drunk, and intemperance does not exist to any appreciable extent, but individuals living in mild climates when transported to Scotland generally find that they fall into the habit of drinking whisky in much the same manner as the natives.

Of course, drinking in excess does not exist now to any extent, in comparison to what was practised from fifty to a hundred years ago. Then it was a matter of faith with the average Scotchman, and a man was valued according to the amount of whisky he could carry without visible effect. A better state of things prevails now, although, of course, even yet dram drinking is too frequently indulged in, but temperance principles have thoroughly established their claim for consideration by all classes, and in the course of another few decades we may hope to see the evils associated with hard drinking banished from Scotland altogether.

FIFTH.

Stories of "The Folk" and Their Followers.

A VERY long chapter might be devoted to stories which throw side lights on the peculiar ways and characteristics of "folk foibles." Many of them show that the main chance is often kept steadily in view, and at the same time public opinion is regarded with a side-long glance.

A small farmer whose little dairy farm was situated on the East Coast of Fife, was a man who valued very highly the good opinion of his neighbours, and at the same time knew how to extract the utmost value he could without incurring the censure of his friends for parsimonious practices. At times, however, greed overcame discrimination. On one occasion several waggon loads of turnips had been deposited at his gate, and as he was usually short of farm labourers he invited a number of the village boys to assist him in carrying the turnips, which were to feed his cattle, into the store where they were kept. The boys, nothing loth, set to work with a will, and in the matter of an hour the task was accomplished. They naturally expected some

tangible reward, hoping at least that each would be presented with a juicy Swede turnip, and a few even dreamt of something better, but one can imagine their astonishment and dismay when our friend, as he closed the gate and fastened it up, put his head over and said—

"Noo, a' rin awa' hame an' get jeely pieces."

In this instance his reputation suffered somewhat, for the boys, needless to say, aired without restraint their complaints to everyone they met.

The backwardness of Scotch children has already been commented upon, and it is a feature in the Scotch character which is very hard for any other nationality to understand. Especially is this diffidence noticeable in small country districts where children do not meet with many strangers. Certainly this quality will be found anywhere where children lead a somewhat solitary life, but in Scotland it exists to an extent which isolation does not completely account for.

Scotch children very often, when a stranger appears, fly as if for their lives, and may be discovered by a shrewd observer keeking out from some hiding-place watching developments.

On one occasion two young men had been invited to a friend's house for a game of cards. They arrived about nine o'clock in the evening, and one of them was conscious, or semi-conscious, as he entered the lobby of seeing, or imagining he saw, something white flitting past him. However, he did not give this a second thought, and in a few

"This is not the Glesca train?"

"Is it no?"

(*See page 32.*)

minutes he and his friends were sitting round a small table deeply interested in a game of whist.

At the end of half an hour one of them suddenly moved his foot and touched something which did not suggest the leg of a table. On looking down he discovered two small children almost naked, who, in the act of going to bed, had been surprised in the lobby and had flown as if possessed. Not having time to get to their own bedroom they made for the nearest shelter, which, unfortunately, had been the drawing-room. When the visitors appeared at the drawing-room door their next thought was "where can we hide?" Under the table seemed the only secure position, and accordingly there they went. Imagine their horror when the strangers seated themselves comfortably at the table, and there they sat shivering, vainly hoping that something might happen.

When discovered they made a bolt for the door, and the young man then remembered what he had seen in the lobby, and the whole thing became perfectly clear to him. One imagines that an occurrence of this kind could not happen outside of "puir auld Scotland."

It used to be an article of faith with the Scotch mother that her progeny must take porridge for breakfast. Whatever else they took a plate of porridge had to be eaten first, and one can easily imagine the sufferings of the poor children whose stomachs did not take kindly to oatmeal. The mother

stood over them resolute and resourceful, determined that her hasty pudding must be eaten.

In connection with porridge it is a fact that in Scotland the word in common with broth is used in a plural sense. Porridge is always referred to as "them."

"Yes," says the irate mother to her rebellious offspring, "ye'll tak' them, or, if ye dinna, ye'll get them to yer dinner. Good gracious, if it was kent that ye didna tak' yer parritch, what would the folk think?"

Various expedients were resorted to in the case of special recalcitrants, sugar, syrup, treacle, butter, and even small beer were requisitioned, and no effort was spared to induce the rebel to capitulate. Threatening and cajoling were used indiscriminately so long as the desired result was obtained and the porridge swallowed.

It seemed to be a belief, possibly not without foundation, that oatmeal, to some extent, had made the Scotchman what he is, and the patriotic mother felt that if her offspring did not take "them" at least to one meal, decadence was a matter of certainty. Of course most Scotch children with a healthy appetite like nothing better than porridge and milk, and it is stimulating in the extreme to see on the ledge of some kitchen window in the early morning a row of bowls filled with steaming "burgoo."

Nowadays certainly, to a considerable extent, the rigorous belief has waned, and possibly, on the whole,

with beneficial results, particularly to town children whose appetite has not the keen edge of their country cousins though even yet it will be hard to convince survivors of the last generation that it does not spell ruin for puir Scotland.

A worthy Scotchman who was very much attached to the kirk and very fond of using lang-nebbit or unusual words when he got the chance, was orating about the absurdity of not reading any kind of literature on Sunday except that which is strictly religious. At the same time he gave utterance to the opinion that it was unfortunate that strictly kirk people did not agree with him. This oration ended with the following :—

"If ye read a book that has a strain o' religion in it, there's naebody complains, but if ye read *Chambers's Journal* they'll *tatoo* ye."

The good man evidently meant taboo, but not very sure as to his meaning, and his ear playing him false, the astonished listener immediately pictured to himself a man with needles and Indian ink dealing out unusual punishment to the unfortunate offenders.

This same individual on one occasion resolved to give a party. He was a church deacon, and invited a number of his fellow office holders and some other friends. He was determined to do the thing handsomely, so, after telling his wife to spare no expense in making everything satisfactory, he left the whole matter in her hands. But Leebie, who was of an economical turn of mind, though at

one with Sandy as regards doing justice to the dignity of his church position, had discovered a new butcher who was said to give extraordinary value. To this man she accordingly went and purchased a huge roast at an extraordinarily low price. She wondered herself at the man selling beef at such a figure, but it seemed all right, and she thought it would be a foolish proceeding to pay more.

The dinner-party night arrived, and the guests sat solemnly round the table. Soup was served and all began to talk except one silent man at the foot of the table who said nothing. Next came the event of the evening, the serving of the mighty roast. Sandy fairly glowed with pride as he looked from the end of the table at the mountain of flesh, on which the gaze of all eyes was centred.

"Leebie has dune the thing weel," was his mental observation.

The ruling elder, who was sitting beside the roast, was asked to carve, and, though he was a very strong man and his knife was sharp, he found it impossible to make any impression. One by one the other guests tried their hand, but in vain, nothing in the shape of steel could go through the tough sirloin, which seemed to resemble the sinews and muscles of a lion or tiger. One can imagine what poor Leebie was suffering, tears were in her eyes, Sandy was nearly distracted.

Then Leebie made her explanation to the guests, and said, "I'm sure it lookit a bonny roast when I bocht it."

"Where did you buy it?" said the ruling elder.

She mentioned the butcher's name, whereupon the silent man at last raised his head and in a solemn voice said, "It's bull* beef they keep."

One can quite understand the impossibility of cutting up the tough old carcass of a 20-year old bull So poor Leebie's party after all ended in disaster.

At the time of the South African War, Sandy, who was a very keen observer of all the movements of the campaign, was astounded one morning when a friend said to him that it was currently believed Russia would assail us in India while we were in difficulties fighting the Boers. Sandy exclaimed—

"It's no possible, that would be rale low. Guidness, we'll ken wha oor freens are noo. But I canna believe 't. If the Russian politeecians played sic a dirty trick their freens would never speak to them again."

Poor Sandy's ideas of politics had evidently never got beyond his school days, and he only remembered that the boy who played a low game was sent to "Coventry" by his chums, and that "the folk" would not tolerate such a line of action.

He was once invited to a small supper party by his next-door neighbour, and had anything but a pleasant experience. In describing it he said—

"It taks a lot to upset me, but the like o' yon I never saw. What worried me maist was

* Pronounced as in lull.

the fac' that Leebie was wi' me. Thamson himsel' is a dacent kin' o' man, but there was a niece o' his at the pairty wha cam frae Manchester, an' the wey she cairried on I never saw the like, singin', jokin', an' speakin' wi' everybody, jist as if she was ane o' the faimily. Ye should hae seen the wey she was dressed; she had white saitin slippers on and what they ca' net-work stockin's, an' her dress had a low neck. Guidness, when I lookit at her it was nae pleasant sicht for me. Leebie was ance thinkin' o' speakin' to her aboot her conduck, but I advised her no to say onythin'. At supper, too, she clappit doon aside me and giggled at me a' the time, finishin' up by sayin', 'You're the funniest man, Mr. Bawswell, I ever saw in my life.' Ay, she was a queer ane. I was angry at Thamson askin' her, an' spoke aboot it to him the next day, but he said he couldna help it, she was his niece. Ye'll maybe no believe me when I tell you, but she was seen the next day gaun a' roon' the toon lookin' at shop windows wi' a married man, a freen' o' her uncle's, so, of coorse, efter that, I need say nae mair. She didna care a doit 'what the folk thocht.'"

And quite right, too, Sandy, one is inclined to exclaim, if her faults were not more serious than those recounted.

Occasionally Sandy was rather upset in connection with the kind of sermons which modern ministers preach, and he was horrified one day to discover his clergyman walking to the railway station with, "Ye'll never guess what," a pair of knickerbockers on.

"It's no dacent," said he, "I dinna ken what ministers are comin' to, their sermons are no worth listenin' to, and they're aye craikin' for money, but I dinna blame them a' thegether, for 'the folk'll' hardly listen to the sermon. Dae ye ken this? They'll no even turn up the place in the Bible noo. I dinna ken whether I'm turnin' an authiest or what, but there's something faur wrang.

"The ither day 'oor ane' made a kin' o' conundrum oot o' the pulpit; it was this: He said, 'My friends, a thought struck me yesterday as I was walking up Hope Street, a rather quaint idea. Will I tell you what it was, or will I not? No, yes, I will. I went past the *Evening News* office, and saw there over one hundred thousand people gathered together waiting with excited eagerness the bulletins from America giving tidings of the *Sham*-rock; on going a bit further up the street I came to a hall where a special religious meeting was being held, and an address given by an Indian missionary describing his work in India, and only twenty people were there to hear tidings of the *True*-rock.'

"When I heard this I lookit at Leebie, and she lookit at me and whispers, 'Sandy, this is nae place for us.'"

When Sandy was elected to the deaconship he was more than ordinarily pleased, and Leebie was an exceedingly proud woman. But he soon found that there are other considerations to be reckoned with besides honour and glory when one assumes a public position. He found that it was practically

impossible for him to get a collector for his district, very likely owing to his peculiarities and irascibility. His wife had to do the work, which was over a rather extended area, and naturally she grumbled. At a meeting of the session which was held on the evening of a day on which Leebie had grumbled more than usual, Sandy at last thought he had found his chance.

The young missionary in making a little speech relative to the ladies of the church, remarked—

"It is a matter for congratulation that the young ladies consider neither their personal inconvenience nor their time in doing any kind of work connected with the church."

Sandy thought "now's my time," and when the missionary finished he rose and said—

"It's a gey funny thing if the young leddies are sae willin' to dae a' kinds o' work that I canna get a collector. My wife has had to dae a' the collectin' in my district for the last six months."

Then the ruling elder, who considered Sandy a humbugging busybody, stood up. He was a burly man with a long white beard, whose presence alone was enough to fill Sandy with dismay.

"Mr. Bawswell," said he, "when the missionary spoke of the young ladies he spoke of them collectively not individually."

Sandy told his wife when he got home, "I took that to mean, in plain English, sit doon, Mr. Bawsell, ye're no wantit to speak here, an' I sat doon, but made up my mind to leave the kirk."

During the ensuing Sundays Sandy and Leebie experimented by going to the different churches near, and carefully considered the sermons and general tone of the singing, etc., etc. One church rather pleased Sandy, at least the sermon did, but Leebie absolutely refused to consent to their joining on account of the speed at which the hymns and psalms were sung.

"Na, na," said she, "it'll no dae; there's ower much o' the mairchin' on to glory, hallelujah, quick time fur me."

However, after a few months they discovered a church which they thought would suit them, and accordingly Sandy sent in a very weightily-considered document tendering his resignation, and calling the attention of the clergyman to the various weaknesses of the church, and at the same time regretting exceedingly that he had to leave the old pew where he had sat as a boy. He concluded by stating that the way he had been treated over the matter of the collector had been the "last straw that broke the *elephant's* back."

In relating to a friend the history of his resignation, he said he was more than surprised and hurt to find that his "lines" were sent on by return of post, and he added in a pathetic tone they were simply folded up like a circular, and a halfpenny stamp on them. Doubtless the clergyman's patience was completely exhausted at Sandy's continual grumblings.

This poor man was ever considering "What'll the folk think" to such an extreme that he always ended in trouble, and certainly proved that, though being mindful of public opinion is valuable if it goes only a certain length, it is disastrous if over much attention is given to it.

Another character very similar to Sandy imagined himself to be a sagacious literary critic. The books he read as a rule were all rather light, but occasionally he stumbled across a work which completely took him out of his depths. This man was also rather religious in a way, at least as far as "the folk" were concerned. One day he got hold of George Meredith's "Richard Feveril." Possibly we had better leave him to give his own criticism on it. He said, "It's ower plain speakin' fur me, I dinna un'erstan' yon demy-mondee women." Meaning, doubtless, *demi-monde.* "They jist speak as if they were men. I couldna tell Peggie what the book was aboot. I hid it frae her, for I wadna like her to read it. When yon ane cam' in wi' men's claes on, I couldna believe what I was readin', the bluid ran to my face. Na, na, ye may talk aboot George Meredith as ye like, but to my mind ye wad be faur better to read the wholesome works o' Annie Swan."

This same man, who was very punctilious as regards what he thought was proper, had another terrible experience once in connection with the factory where he worked. He worked in a corner of a large flat, where a number of girls were employed, his little room being cut off by a partition

about six feet high. As his work did not involve noise of any kind he heard what was going on in the other parts of the room, and one day he came down with a white face and told his employer that he could not work any longer upstairs.

"What is wrong?" said his employer.

"I canna tell ye the conversation that goes on, but I can tell ye this, I canna listen to it ony longer."

"But," said the other, "surely to goodness it can't be so bad as all that; what have they been saying?"

"Sayin'," said he, "I canna let the words cross ma lips. I'll tell ye this, as I sat and listened the bluid ran to my face. I heard ane o' them singin' a sang the ither day, and it was a perfect disgrace."

"What was the song?" asked the employer.

"As I said afore I couldna let the words cross ma lips, but if ye hae a pencil and paper I'll write them doon fur ye."

Whereupon pencil and paper being supplied he wrote down the following four lines, in which one should imagine very sharp eyes indeed would be required if anything wrong were to be detected:—

"When I was young,
I was fond of a glass;
And wherever I went
I had always a lass."

His employer vainly tried to impress upon him that there was nothing wicked in the words, but he was immovable, and at the end had to be put

into a room which completely excluded any such nonsense and talk. This man also doubtless had fixed his standard of morality according to what he thought "the folk" dictated, but being a man of a small brain and narrow mind, he had completely gone out of his reckoning, though he sturdily held on to what he considered was right.

Though the Scotch are not an emotional race naturally, any emotional religious body is sure to meet with a good reception in Scotland. On one occasion a new religious organisation called "The Singing Pilgrims," visited various districts in Scotland and made a large number of converts. We had better describe their *modus operandi* in the words of an old Scotch lady, who invariably attended their meetings. She was telling a niece of hers, a rather up-to-date young lady, whom she was visiting, about the wondrous work of "The Singing Pilgrims."

"Ay, Maggie," said she, "they hae made a wunnerfu' difference in oor toon—that tea o' yours is faur ower strong, what an awfu' browst! Ay, as I was sayin', oor Jamie gangs to a' the meetin's, ye ken he sings in the choir, he's a baister. Ye mun gang and hear them when ye're through to see me, or, 'What'll the folk think?' They hae a lot o' gran' hymns and psalms. Ye ken the Singin' Pilgrims cam' frae America jist to convert the folk. When they convert ye they bapteeze ye ower again in the Howe Burn. Ye ken the wee burn that rins through oor toon. Weel! they dook them a' doon there, and the of'ner ye're dippit in the burn the

mair sin comes oot. They tell me on Monday nicht *the burn rose five inches* afore they were dune. They had Rab Ha' (the village simpleton) and a' they anes there."

This poor woman evidently did not in the least analyse the matter, but simply considered that being a religious one it was bound to be perfectly right.

A funny story is told by a traveller who was staying at an hotel in a small country town for the week-end. About 10 o'clock a young man came into the sitting-room with a rush, evidently having had a good dram. The traveller and he were the only two staying over night, and the young man, after ringing the bell and ordering a glass of whisky, said—

"I've jist come up frae Galashiels to see my sister, she's in a place in St. Andrews, and I should hae got there the nicht, but I lost the connection and I'll need to drive ower the morn's mornin'."

After some preliminary conversation he launched out, and described his business prospects, etc., etc.

"I'm a grocer, I'm heid assistant. Ay, he's a gey clever fella the maister, ye couldna imagine hoo much money he's makin'. Na, ye couldna imagine it, and if I was to tell ye, ye'd simply say I was a leear."

However, after a little encouragement, he proceeded—

"Weel, I'll tell ye, but I ken ye'll no believe't; weel," with great mysteriousness, "he makes a poun' a day. A poun' a day, I ken

ye'll no believe't, but it's quite true, he makes a poun' a day. Ay, and he kens hoo to spend it too. Dae ye ken this, he thinks naething maybe ance in twa years o' takin' the matter o' £7 or so, and gaun awa' to Paris for a fortnicht," and so on *ad infinitum.*

The young fellow, evidently with his eye on "the folk," had determined to make a good impression on his listener, and was quite unconscious of his companion's scarcely concealed merriment.

A young Scotchman who had not been long married had a bad cold, and was being doctored by his wife, whose experience of nursing was rather limited, but to be like "ither folk" she determined to do her best. He himself rather favoured a poultice being put on his chest, but, never having applied this kind of cure before, she was rather nervous about it. But he insisted, and accordingly the porridge pot was put on the fire, and in a few minutes the poultice was ready. But, unfortunately, the cloth which the good wife used as a covering was rather small, and the invalid, making a sudden turn in his bed, disarranged the fastening, and the poultice slipped all over him. The language used by an ordinary man under such conditions can well be understood. His wife came to the rescue, and the remains of the poultice were gathered together, and he was once more waiting for a remedy. She now proposed mustard leaves, but added that as far as she could mind one was not sufficient, and he would require three.

"Ay," said he, "ye hae made a parridge-pat o' me already, but ye'll no turn me into a bill-post."

After some persuasion he was induced to allow the mustard leaves to be applied, and the amateur nurse, who soaked them first, applied them streaming with water. The effect of this, as one can imagine, although the extreme opposite of the porridge poultice, was almost as disagreeable, and he pathetically remarked, after succumbing to the inevitable—

"I micht jist as weel be lyin' in a burn."

A worthy Glasgow body called Robbie Fraser, who imagined that the house in which he and his wife had lived for many years was too small, resolved to change his residence towards the outskirts of the city. Accordingly, after a considerable search, he found a district and building which suited his requirements. The house was not finished, but as it was only March when he and his wife were searching, they considered that the builder was certain to have his work finished. This he absolutely promised to do, and our worthy friend signed the necessary papers, and arranged to enter at the May term. We had better leave Robbie to tell the rest of the story.

"Whan the time had come, and we were flittin', the hoose was nae further forward than it had been in Mairch. The panels werena i' the ootside door, and the win' blew through the hoose like a hurricane. Guidness, I thocht it wad mak' a fine *simmer* hoose, and I was richt.

Sometimes the win' was sae strong that the claes were near blawn aff ye when ye were in yer bed. The ither mornin' Janet was in the kitchen fryin' the ham and eggs, and as I gaed into the bath-room to wash my face I saw twa milk-laddies wi' their heids through the empty panels i' the ootside door, takin' a look through a' the hoose. As ye can un'erstan' I wasna gaun to stan' this kin' o' thing, so I had a crack wi' some o' the neeboors, and ane o' them ca'ed M'Greegor said—

"'Leave this to me. I'll refuse to pey the rent when the quarter comes, and he'll hae to raise an action against me, then ye'll see what I'll dae. I'll get you, Robbie, for a wutness, and there's a mason and j'iner I ken wha'll dae fur experts. I'll no engage a lawyer, I've been i' the coort afore, and I ken exactly hoo to tackle a law case as weel's a lawyer.'

"I had great confidence in Mac mysel', as he's a kin' o' heidy body, so at the en' o' the quarter he refused to pey the rent, and the landlord raised an action. That mornin' whan we gaed to the coort Jinnet cam' wi's, and jist afore we gaed in M'Greegor said—

"'Noo, we'll jist be feenished by 1 o'clock, and ye'll a' come wi' me fur lunch. I'll gie ye a guid lunch because I'll get damages, and he'll hae to pey a' the expenses forbye.'

"When we gaed into the coort we were a' herded into a room they ca'd the witness-room, and I didna see Janet again till I stude up i'

"You don't dress for dinner?"

"No! I leave dressin' for dinner to clerks, and such like as you are."

(See page 38.)

the witness-box. She was i' the coort, ane o' the spectators. The first that was ca'd was M'Greegor. Humph! there's nae justice i' the lan'. The sheriff cam' oot, a wee fat man wi' a white wig an' a red face, and he jist sniggered and lauched at us a'. The number o' oor case was, I think, 197, which meant that frae 10 to 12 o'clock they had feenished 197 cases afore we cam'. There's nae justice i' this country.

"'Well, my man, what is wrong with you, why won't you pay your rent?' says he.

"'Why?' says M'Greegor, 'my lord! because the hoose wasna habitable.'

"'Indeed! if the house was not habitable, why did you live in it for three months?'

"M'Greegor was rather nonplussed, but said, 'O! I had taen the hoose, and I suppose jist had to leeve in it.'

"'Nothing of the kind,' said the sheriff; 'not at all necessary, you should have gone to live somewhere else, and raised an action for costs against your landlord. But what is wrong with the house?'

"'O, weel, my lord,' said Mac, 'I hae a fine new carpet that cost me £3 10s., and if I had pit that carpet doon it wad hae been ruined.'

"'So you did not put the carpet down,' said the sheriff. 'Then you have no right to claim damages if no damage was done.' M'Greegor was again silenced. 'Anything else?'

"'O, weel,' said he, 'I hae been in mony a hoose, but never a hoose like that. It was three weeks

efter we entered afore we had the wa's papered, an' the panels i' the ootside door werena feenished for a fortnicht efter we gaed into the hoose.'

"'That is quite a common occurrence as regards the paper,' said his lordship, 'and in good summer weather like this,' and here he gied a nicher o' a lauch, 'the absence of the panels would do you good rather than harm, as it would allow you to have plenty of fresh air, and as you say your carpet was not laid, there has been no damage done that I can see; stand down, sir; next witness.'

"The next witness was the mason.

"'Well,' said the sheriff, 'what do you know about this house?'

"'O,' said he "I've had 30 years' experience in Glesca, an' never saw afore sic a badly feenished hoose.'

"'What was wrong with it?' said his lordship.

"'O, I wouldna like to mention details,' said the mason, 'but it wasna feenished when the man gaed in.'

'Bosh,' said his lordship, 'this man evidently knows nothing about the case; stand down; next witness.'

"The j'iner was the next witness, but M'Greegor thocht efter the mason's experience he had better no ca' him, so I was pit in insteed. As I gaed into the witness-box I thocht M'Greegor lookit gey shilpit like, and I jist caught Jinnet's e'e, and I thocht she was gey peely-wally lookin'. I couldna think what was wrang wi' them, for of coorse though I

learnt a' aboot M'Greegor and the mason efter, at the time I kent naething.

"'Well,' said the sheriff, 'what do you know about this house of M'Gregor's, is it habitable?'

"'Weel, my lord,' says I, 'I leeve i' the same block, and oor hoose is abune M'Greegor's; but I hae never been in his hoose mysel'.

"'You stupid idiot,' said the sheriff, 'is it possible that a man can come here with practically not a spark of the commonest of common sense to give evidence about a house in which he has never been; stand down at once, sir; case finished, for the defendant, costs to be paid by plaintiff.'

"Ye can imagine hoo we a' lookit as we cam' oot o' the door. Mac jist said as I said—

"'There's nae justice i' the lan'.'

"We didna say onything to him aboot the lunch, as we thocht he wad hae enough to pey, so Jinnet and me jist gaed an' had a cup o' tea at Cranston's instead. Dae ye ken this, I hae learnt since that an auld shaemakker wha leeved on the grun' flair had been stayin' at a hotel for six weeks, refusin' to gang into the hoose, and he raised an action for damages, and got £20 aff the landlord. Na, there's nae justice i' the lan'. We should jist hae steyed i' oor auld hoose. If it hadna been fur Jinnet I wadna hae flitted. That's jist what ye get fur wantin' fine hooses, jist to please ither folk."

Another clear instance of how a man can suffer through injudicious consideration of "What'll the folk think?"

Most Scotch people of the poorer class are familiar with the horrors attached to the washing-day. The house from morning till night has a smell of soap-suds. One falls over bundles of clothes at every turn, and the women folk are in a chronic state of ill-temper. One can imagine what it is when a number of small children are to be reckoned with. Generally one of the bigger ones has to be kept at home to look after the youngest. On such an occasion when the boy who acted as nurse returned to school after being absent on the previous day, the teacher called out—

"John Gulland, why were you not at school yesterday?"

The reply, which convulsed the whole school, teachers included, was shouted out in a high and shrill voice, "It was the washin'-day, and I was keepin' the bairn."

Picture what the little chap suffered when he found out through the shouts of laughter what "the folk" thought of his reply to the master's query.

Many a joke is cracked at the expense of the Scotchman in connection with threepenny bits.

Everyone knows the answer to the conundrum, "What are threepenny bits made for?"

"To enable Scotchmen to contribute to silver collections," and though this is an exaggeration, as the Scotchman is found to be generally as generous as John Bull or Micky, there is at the same time a vein of truth in it. Many stories are told about

the number of threepenny bits which find their way into the bag when a silver collection is made at a concert or other performance.

It is related that, in small villages, the tills of the shop-keepers are completely depleted of the little silver coins, and within two hours of the meeting threepenny bits sell for fourpence, as they effect a saving of twopence on the part of the lucky possessor, who otherwise would have to give sixpence. Such a state of matters might be called a "corner" in threepenny bits.

"The folk" decree that one must attend certain concerts and functions and subscribe to the collection, and the method of handing over a threepenny bit on such occasions is peculiar in itself. When the bag is passed round, the coin, well hidden in the palm of the hand, is dropped with as much noise as possible. To the neighbours it is quite possible that you have put in sixpence, while to anyone possessing considerable imagination it might even be a shilling, and your own conscience and "the folk" are perfectly satisfied.

At a small hydropathic not 100 miles from Glasgow a performance was given at Christmas time. Six entertainers came down from the town on the understanding that, though no definite sum was to be paid them, a collection in silver was to be held, and the entire proceeds were to be handed over. As the hydropathic was well filled it seemed as if the performers had made rather a good bargain. They came down on Saturday afternoon, and, as

the performance was in the evening, they had to stay until Monday morning. The performance came off, and amid considerable grumbling because of a collection of any kind being made, the grumblers declaring that amusement at a hydropathic should be provided free, the bag was passed round. The manager of the hydropathic, who was an Englishman, described to a friend with tears in his eyes what the result was.

"Would you believe it," said he, "I had one half-crown, one shilling, two sixpenny pieces, and thirty-three threepenny bits," making a total of twelve shillings and ninepence with which he was to pay six performers, who had practically given up two days of their time. The only thing that could be done was to pay them something out of the hydropathic funds, and this the manager did.

Stories of a similar kind are told in relation to the humble halfpenny which, according to the narrators, is the coin which is most in evidence at the ordinary church collections in Scotland. One story, which the Scotchman undoubtedly will recognise as coming from England, describes a family getting ready for the kirk, all possibly being a little late, having slept too long, each rather in a bad temper, everybody wanting to get washed at the same time, stumbling against each other, and haste and excitement of a general kind prevailing all over the house. At last everyone is ready and dressed in the habiliments sanctioned by "the folk."

The head of the family has a ha'penny-worth of peppermint drops in his pocket, which are to keep the family from sleeping should the sermon be dry, and just before the family leaves the house, Paterfamilias says to his wife after examining the various coins in his pocket—

"Hae ye ony ha'pennies?"

"Preserve me, Thamas," she answers, "hae ye forgotten the ha'pennies?"

"Ay," says he, "I was late last nicht i' the shop an' forgot a' aboot them."

"I'll see," she answers tremulously as she opens her purse, then her face becomes pale, and she answers in a tone of despair—

"Thamas, I hae nae ha'pennies, there's naething but pennies in ma purse. We canna gang to the kirk the day, an' what'll the folk think?"

Peppermints, besides keeping the sleepy awake, serve another purpose in Scotland. After partaking of a dram, the drinker sometimes "whups" an "extra-strong" peppermint into his mouth, and its powerful aroma kills, to a considerable extent, the smell of the spirits. If this is done "the folk" are more willing to condone the offence, and a mutual understanding is generally arrived at between them and the culprit to the effect that he is bothered "wi' win' i' the breist," and that peppermints help to "brek it."

One can easily imagine the many humorous incidents which took place in the house of an old Scotch lady who kept French lodgers. A Frenchman who lived there relates some funny experiences

he had. For instance, sitting down to tea in the evening with the window open, he was astonished by the landlady saying—

"Ye'll hae to shut the window, ye canna tak' yer tea in ma hoose wi' the window open, preserve me, 'What wud the folk think?'"

It is easy to understand that the Frenchman for the life of him could not see what harm the open window did.

On another occasion he was feeling ill, and said to his landlady in the morning—

"I have a sore belly."

"Whisht," said the landlady, "ye manna say that; ye mean a sair stummach."

"No," said the Frenchman, "I mean a sore belly."

"Na, na," said the landlady, "it's a sair stummach ye hae."

"Well," said the Frenchman, "if I have a sore stomach, my stomach is in the wrong place."

The landlady, decent woman, felt that such an expression was not quite the right thing, and that "the folk" would certainly condemn it, so she suggested an alternative which she thought might satisfy both parties.

In a little town in the North of Scotland the local pig-killer was called Rob Morris, and naturally when a pig was condemned all the lads in the neighbourhood were anxious to view the execution. One small boy who had been endeavouring to get near returned home and said to his father in a tone of pride—

"Rob Morris spoke to me."

His father, who did not have a very high opinion of Rob Morris, intellectually or otherwise, replied sarcastically,, "Indeed, and what did he say to ye?"

"Oh," said the boy, glowing with pride at the thought of such a great man condescending to speak to him, "he said, 'Get oot o' this, ye young blackguard.'"

The ignominy of being ordered off was insufficient to chill his pleasure when he reflected that "the folk" must be dying with envy when they knew that he and the pig-killer had exchanged words.

A popular drink amongst small boys in Scotland is called, according to the locality, "Rabbie Burns' beer," "treacle peerie," or "skeechan." It is made of treacle and water, and is very light indeed. On one occasion a small boy found a threepenny bit in the middle of the road, over which evidently half a score of cart-wheels had passed, as it was very hard to discern any markings on it. Nevertheless, the finder with three or four friends went into a greengrocer's shop where "skeechan" was sold and ordered two bottles. The bottles were emptied, then the battered threepenny bit was tendered in payment. The dame behind the counter was a bit of a strategist, doubtless from long contact with "the folk," and knowing that if she said anything while at the other side of the counter very possibly the boys would beat a precipitate retreat, so without speaking she walked slowly round the counter to the door, put her hand on the handle and then said—

"This is a bad threepenny bit; I'll tell ye what ye'll dae; twa o' ye'll stey here, an' the rest 'll gang oot an' try an' get change frae some ither shop."

The two boys evidently were kept as hostages in case the others did not return. After waiting a quarter of an hour the good woman grew tired and went into the back shop, first daring the youngsters to leave. As soon as she had gone, naturally the two began to have a look round, and close at hand they found a large supply of juicy turnips, apples, etc., and evidently considering that the strained relations existing between themselves and the shopkeeper justified reprisals, they filled their pockets to overflowing. A few minutes after, their friends returned, having persuaded some unfortunate grocer to give them change. The penny was paid for the two bottles of "skeechan," and the boys repaired to a field to divide and consume the plunder, and one, the sage of the group, remarked—

"She wadna mak' much profit oot o' that penny, but, chaps, ye maunna say onything aboot it or what wad folk think?"

Scotch boys are like other boys, and sometimes do a little petty pilfering when an opportunity arises, though they, like their elders, have an eye on "the folk." A worthy dame from a country district was visiting a relation in Edinburgh, and, seeing that plums were being sold at a very low price, decided to buy a few pounds and take them

home with her to make into jam. The plums were bought and put into a large basket, which was laid on a shelf in a press.

The two boys unfortunately passed this press each morning as they left the house to go to school. During the first day or two they manfully resisted temptation, the fear of "the folk" lending them strength, but the thought of the basket of plums was in their mind's eye during the whole day. Several times they were punished for neglect of their work, solely caused by the vision, continually flitting before them, of a large basket of succulent plums.

After the third day they held a consultation, and decided that half a dozen plums would never be missed. Accordingly on their way out in the morning six plums were extracted from the basket. Having once tasted blood it naturally followed that on the two succeeding days the performance was repeated. Still they heard nothing, and becoming emboldened by silence large numbers of plums were extracted till at the end of the fortnight which the old lady was passing in the city, they had been reduced to about half the original quantity.

On the morning of the good lady's departure the basket was hauled out from its hiding place, and the two women looked on with amazement.

The mother of the boys, naturally making the best of a bad job and having "the folk" in her mind's eye, said, "They've fa'en. They've fa'en."

"Ay, they've fa'en," said her friend, "but into yer laddies' stomachs."

"What! my laddies may be a heap o' things, but they're no thieves," said the mother.

"Yer laddies are jist like ither laddies," returned the other, "an' I should 'a' haen the common sense to pit the plums oot o' their reach."

A Scotchman who had a son in London, went to the Metropolis for a holiday. He visited most places of interest, but being an old man, and the time at his disposal being limited, he did not see everything. A young Englishman who encountered him in his native village some time after, was having a "crack" with him relative to the wonderful city. The Londoner named various places, and asked him if he had seen them. Old Scottie, feeling several listeners were present, and that he would be lowered in the estimation of the "folk" if he acknowledged he had not seen everything, answered in the affirmative in every case. "I suppose," said the Englishman, "you saw some of our east-end district?" "Oh! ay," said the old man, "me and ma son gaed a' ower the east-end." "I presume you saw the Seven Dials and Petticoat Lane?" pursued the Southron. "I did that," said the Scotchman, "terrible places yon." "And I suppose you visited our wild Whitechapel district?" added the Londoner. "Ay, I was there," he replied, "we were gled to get oot o' yon place, it is a perfect den o' iniquity." Then after a short pause the Englishman resumed, "And of

course you would go to the Rotten Row." The old man had not been to the Row, but judging from the previous conversation, and the name, that it must be a place of the same character as the other districts discussed, only possibly worse, he replied, "Rotten Row! Oh! ay, I was there, yon beats Whitechapel a'thegither, ay, man without doobt, it's a roch shop yon."

How does this description of their favourite ride strike the fashionable world of Hyde Park?

It is quite evident that whatever results from the practice of considering "what the folk 'll think?" there is plenty of humour in the train of its observance; and in the great journey of life, where the tendency is for men to lack individuality and to resemble each other more and more, it is a relief to the jaded traveller on the tiresome road of daily routine when a quaint character is met with or a humorous incident transpires.

SIXTH.

Scotch Women's Peculiarities.

IT is a delicate matter to criticise the sex, but it is necessary in considering "what'll the folk think?" in all its aspects to have something to say about its relation to women. No nation has a higher opinion of its women than the Scotch, though some of them are not without odd idiosyncrasies of character. Of course the peculiarities of Scotch women who lived fifty years ago are much less accentuated in their descendants, and especially is this the case in large towns. At the same time some Scotch women possess characteristics essentially Scotch which cannot be found in women of other nations to anything like the same extent.

Scotch women of last generation had a strong personal regard for "What'll the folk think?" They had been accustomed to hear this phrase from childhood. The Scotch woman when a little girl was quite familiar with an irate lecture from her mother when she stayed out too late at night or committed some other peccadillo, and this invariably finished up with "What'll the folk think?" and one can easily understand, in spite of the modern movement to enlarge woman's sphere and the gradual breaking down of the trammels with which she has been

surrounded for centuries, that there are still some Scotch women who, casually, no matter where they are or whatever they do, furtively look round in case "the folk" are present.

This, of course, is an excellent quality when it goes a certain length only, but when it is carried beyond reasonable limits it creates an endless array of troubles. It is the boast of Scotchmen that their women possess sound judgment and much common-sense, but fifty years ago these gifts were considerably minimised through too much regard for what neighbours thought.

Some Scotch women, even now, considering "the folk" over much, often live simply to satisfy the wishes of those who to all intents and purposes are their enemies, or at least not their friends. Of course one may say that this indicates to some extent the caution, which is possibly the predominating feature of Scotch character, as, to argue in a very material way, it is more necessary to consider the opinion of your enemies than your friends, as a friend is always open to condone what does not please him, while your enemy, if he finds a weakness in your armour, never hesitates to take advantage of it. But this is not quite an ideal way of looking at things, and after all, if a person live uprightly, he may naturally conclude that enemies cannot harm him much. Certainly this is right so far, but it is well to be held in check by the possibility of what our enemies might do if we deviate from what, according to public opinion, is right.

"Confoond ye, woman, lie still."

(See page 41.)

A medium course which constrains one's actions somewhat in accordance with public opinion is best, for it must be considered that the human race, or at least each of its various sections forming a community, is practically a large family, and as the individuals of each group have to live together under certain conditions it is imperative that some rules of conduct be framed on a broad basis to obviate friction and to foster habits of living conducive to the general welfare. Now the rules which at the present time influence, and to some extent govern, human actions have been dictated by public opinion, and are not to be lightly set aside, as no doubt their crystallisation into the present forms is the result of centuries of experience and change. It is overmuch consideration of "what'll the folk think?" that is objectionable and unprofitable.

Our grandmothers used to bridle their feelings of affection "before folk." This was doubtless the result of the repression of the Scotch people during the past two centuries through the teaching of the clergy, and the other influences which were instrumental in forming the modern Scotch character. They belittled their own folk in public no matter what they thought of them in private. To the Scotch wife of this class her husband was simply "oor ane," and her affection for her lord and master was often mixed with good-humoured contempt.

In connection with this repression of natural affections in public, some rather amusing incidents might be related. Two old Scotch women, decent

bodies, were travelling to England by rail, and a young lady in the compartment roused their curiosity. She was very polite and agreeable, and the two had a lengthy whispered debate as to whether she was Scotch or English.

One said, "There's sae mony up-settin' folk noo-a-days a' tryin' to speak English, that ye canna tell whether they're Scotch or no'."

"I think she's English," said the other, "I'm quite sure o' that."

But the first was inclined to believe otherwise.

On reaching Carlisle the young lady's husband joined the group, and on coming into the carriage he kissed her, whereupon the old lady who had contended that she was English, murmured, "Oh, ay, she's English, there's nae doot aboot it noo," thereby proclaiming her belief that for a married woman in Scotland to kiss her husband in public was a thing unheard of.

The Scotch women of fifty years ago who considered "what'll the folk think" on all occasions led their husbands a troublous life. If he broke any of the unwritten laws of "the folk," such as going home an hour late, looking out of the window with his collar off, allowing some tobacco ash to fall on a neighbour's carpet, going to the kirk without being shaved, etc., etc., she preached a sermon to him of possibly an hour's duration. She was ready at a moment's notice to lay forth to any extent of time an oration, taking for her text, "What'll the folk think?" and all the time the poor decent body

laid forth she glowed with virtue and felt that she was doing the very best thing for herself and the object of her lecture.

This same type of Scotch woman had an extraordinary faculty of creating a different kind of atmosphere in a room from what should naturally be there. This always happens after some poor individual of her family has committed a misdemeanour. The husband, son or daughter, as the case may be, came into the room quite briskly and cheerily, perhaps having forgotten all about the little offence, and immediately discovered from the chilly atmospheric effect in the room that something was wrong. Short replies were given to questions, and the unlucky culprit begins to wonder what had happened. For a time no clue would be given, then, when the fitting moment had arrived and the victim has been sufficiently cooled by the frozen air, the lecture began and ended, as usual, with "What'll the folk think?"

Another type of Scotch woman, almost extinct now, was most objectionable. Her weakness was to continually harp on one string, which was attuned to "What'll the folk think?" She never got angry, but simply went on in a kind of wearied way, the tone of which said, "Isn't it awfu' that I hae to pit up wi' this."

Suppose poor Sandy had forgot to put a hair brush in the bag when going for a holiday, fifty times during the journey in the train and another fifty after they arrive she would put on a saintly smile and say, "Oh! Sandy, it's an awfu' peety

ye forgot the brush," gaining a certain pleasure in thus victimising herself. Some women of other nationalities have this weakness for making themselves victims, unfortunately not knowing that the only result is to irritate those who are listening instead of procuring sympathy, which is the object of the saintly ones.

To women of a timid temperament "the folk" suggest a phalanx of enemies ready to swoop down upon them if the slightest breach is made in their unwritten laws, and to some extent the simile is a good one, for doubtless "the folk" may be considered in the light of an armed neutrality consisting of many individuals, each of whom is continually watching the other.

Up-to-date women of all nationalities more or less resemble each other, nevertheless it is interesting to compare Scotch women, particularly the old type, with those of other countries. American women are absolutely extreme in their contempt for "What'll the folk think?" They go their own way, doing what they want to do, and never give a single thought as to whether the onlookers are pleased or otherwise. This course of action is certainly to be commended, within limits, but it is apt to make women selfish and inconsiderate, and these qualities, all will admit, are not desirable in women folk especially. Yet it is perfectly clear that it is for the welfare of the human race that the women of the civilized world follow in the path of their American sisters to some extent. In fact,

this is being done all over the Western world, and the results are gratifying in the extreme to all true lovers of the sex.

A characteristic of many Scotch women is that each almost always is willing to do battle for her brothers and sisters. No matter what offence they may have committed she is always ready to condone it, and while, if the husband were in the same position, he might be rated severely, an excuse is generally found for the erring brother or sister. This is rather an inexplicable quality, as, when we consider the severe moral platform which the Scotch woman often takes, one should imagine that she would be unusually hard on the offending members of her own family. But this is not the case, and whether this family defence-bond is a survival of the old Highland clan feeling, or whether having an eye on "the folk" the poor woman imagines that whatever criticisms are passed on her brothers and sisters by outsiders react on herself as being one of their nearest relations, it is impossible to say.

This quality is more accentuated by the fact that often with her sons and daughters the Scotch woman of this type deals rather hardly, and usually makes a point, in public at least, of underrating the virtues of her husband and family, and does so feeling assured that she acts in a meritorious manner. Certainly, so far, this is a question of form, her neighbours understanding what she means, and looking upon her action simply as a matter of

politeness. They know perfectly well that she may be thinking the very opposite of what she says. No one will contend otherwise than that this quality which compels the Scotch woman to stand by her brothers and sisters is an excellent one, although when it is carried to extremes it sometimes has a flavour of the mother-in-law about it as far as the husband is concerned.

When a Scotch mother becomes a mother-in-law she carries the same qualities with her, and she seldom has the same feeling towards a son-in-law as she has towards her own sons and daughters. This of course you may say is quite natural, but in England the case seems to be somewhat different, and the son-in-law when he marries into a family becomes one of them, and his mother-in-law's affection is extended to him as though he were in actuality her own son.

Broadly speaking, the modern Scotch woman seems to know man's character better than her grandmother did, with the result that Sandy has a much better time than his ancestors had. In fact, many Scotch women are among the most up-to-date of their sex, and it must be remembered that it is the Scotch woman of fifty years ago who to extremes followed "the folk," though, even now, kindred peculiarities appear in the most unexpected places. Tradition dies very hard, and women generally are much more conservative than men, with the result that, although the daughter distinctly makes a step in advance of her mother, the progress is not very rapid.

"Yes," possibly says some critic, "and a good thing it is too."

Most likely he is right; certainly it is not desirable that Scotch women change too quickly, losing their own good characteristics, and acquiring others which we may not like so well. It will most likely be found that the sex in Scotland, generally speaking, will not be so eager as some other nationalities in the competition which woman engage in against man, being restrained from the practices of the very advanced woman by consideration of "the folk." This must be considered rather an advantage to Scotland than otherwise, and certainly almost every one will admit that in a race of this nature it is better to be too slow than too fast.

In dealing with men the best type of Scotch women follows the line of least resistance. This woman quickly recognises that men have certain peculiarities and weaknesses, and that all the lecturing in the world will be productive of no good, therefore she uses other means, and, subject to her dexterous manipulation, poor Scotty often produces results which could not have been attained by other methods. It is to be feared, though, that some Scotch women, a few perhaps, have no notion of curing their husbands of little weaknesses other than by good solid lengthy lectures, which have for a text the never failing "What'll the folk think?"

SEVENTH.

Conclusion.

ALTHOUGH the influence of "What 'll the folk think" is particularly predominant in Scotland, it must not be forgotten that this, or at least a similar consideration for unwritten social laws, exists all over the world, although the recognised national codes are different, and doubtless the Scotch character with all its contradictions and strength accentuates the peculiarities of the standard for human action which they observe. Each succeeding year the Scotch character loses to a considerable extent its pawkiness, pithiness, and individuality, and becomes more Anglicised, and the language itself in a few years will almost entirely disappear. While cosmopolitan influences bring in their train a host of benefits, it is not without regret that one sees the gradual disappearance of a great many qualities essentially Scotch.

The Scotch language itself has a directness and subtlety of meaning which is rarely found in any other; thus it is almost impossible to convey even to such near neighbours as our English friends the humorous subtleties of Scotch anecdotes and stories. And the same difficulty exists when we try to explain

exactly the peculiar influence which regard for "what the folk think" has on the Scotch race.

Although on the surface one would say that over-consideration of popular opinion would weaken character, it must be remembered that the rules of conduct enjoined by "the folk" are, generally speaking, commendable and meritorious, so that it must be considered that if one carries out what is approved of by the best part of the public, the result will be a line of conduct highly exemplary indeed.

The Scotchman, though he "hear weel and haud fast," does not as a rule thrust his opinion against other people's, though it will be found well nigh impossible if he has finally made up his mind to shake him in his determination. That the Scotchman is exceedingly resolute and calmly opinionative, and at the same time anxious to modify his line of action in accordance with the dictates of public opinion, is extremely paradoxical, and is only to be explained when we consider the forces and circumstances which have made him what he is at the present day.

We must also remember that modern public opinion in Scotland will not demand that a man should sacrifice his individuality so long as he lives in a common-sense way, and does not behave in a foolish or offensive manner. It is only when over-consideration is given to the demands of "the folk" that harm results, and it must not be forgotten that what has been written in these pages applies almost entirely to Scotch character of fifty years ago,

although, of course, a nation does not completely change during half a century. The old peculiarities still remain, but in a modified form, which gives the key to the present-day Scotchman's character and contributes very largely to his success in whatever walk of life he may be found.

Worthy Scotchmen and Scotchwomen, do not be angry if, in depicting some characteristics of your countrymen, weak spots may have been touched. No race exists which has not some eccentricities, and possibly although the Scotchman may have more peculiarities of a kind than many other nationalities in his composition, real weakness, in the true sense, is conspicuous by its absence. Above all we must remember what the immortal bard said—

> "O wad some power the giftie gi'e us,
> To see oursel's as ithers see us."

The writer of this little booklet being a Scotchman possesses the Scotchman's peculiarities, and is rather proud of them than otherwise, although on the eve of the publication of the foregoing pages he must admit that he feels within himself considerable trepidation as to what "the folk'll think" of his little effort.

"WHAT 'LL THE FOLK THINK?"

THERE'S a country no sae faur awa',
Where, very strange tae tell,
Ye dinna eat and drink and work
And play tae please yersel';
Oh, no, ye leeve for ithers, freens,
And cry, an' lauch, an' joke,
And ye smile, an' ye sing, and ye dae everything,
Just tae saitisfee the folk.

Chorus—Oh! what 'll the folk think? ma freens.
Oh! what 'll the folk think?
Ye needna hope, by day or nicht,
Frae their eagle e'en tae jink;
The folk leeve in the faur, faur North,
That lan' o' cakes an' drink,
Oh, whaurever ye are, or whatever ye dae
Keep min' what the folk 'll think.

A man may sometimes tak' a dram
An' still be unco douce,
Fu' drouthy whiles he feels as he
Comes near a public-hoose;
An' as the window he gangs by
He hears the glesses clink,
Then he slips doon the lane to the wee back door,
Or what 'll the folk think?

Chorus—Oh! what 'll the folk think? ma freens.
Oh! what 'll the folk think?
Ye needna hope, by day or nicht,
Frae their eagle e'en tae jink;
The folk leeve in the faur, faur North,
That lan' o' cakes an' drink,
Oh, whaurever ye are, or whatever ye dae,
Keep min' what the folk 'll think.

Oh, whiles you'll meet a mairrit man,
In this country yont the Tweed,
Wi' a "waes-me" look that plainly says,
"I wish that I was deid."
His wife says "See, your tie's a' loose,"
The soun' gars John's e'en blink,
"Pu' your wais'coat doon, pit your pipe i' your pooch,
Or what 'll the folk think?"

Chorus—Oh! what 'll the folk think? ma freens.
Oh! what 'll the folk think?
Ye needna hope, by day or nicht,
Frae their eagle e'en to jink;
The folk leeve in the faur, faur North,
That lan' o' cakes an' drink,
Oh, whaurever ye are, or whatever ye dae,
Keep min' what the folk 'll think.

On Sunday, sometimes, ye rise late,
Wi' a throat like lowin' coal,
For ye gowffed three roonds yest're'en and ne'er
Forgot the 19th hole;
But ye mun draw your black breeks on
(Nae time for meat or drink),
And ye brush your lum hat and awa' to the Kirk
Or what 'll the folk think.

Chorus—Oh! what 'll the folk think? ma freens.
Oh! what'll the folk think?
Ye needna hope, by day or nicht,
Frae their eagle e'en tae jink;
The folk leeve in the faur, faur North,
That lan' o' cakes an' drink,
Oh, whaurever ye are, or whatever ye dae
Keep min' what the folk 'll think.

THE END.

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